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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001040

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/05/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT-WASIT: MID-LEVEL SADRISTS REENGAGE OVER  
DETAINEE RELEASE PROGRAM

REF: A. BAGHDAD 824  
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 952

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Wade Weems for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Wasit reporting cable.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Summary. On 1 April, TL and IPA0 met with three Wasit Sadr Trend district-level officials who complained that ISF and CF operations disproportionately targeted Sadrists, though they admitted the movement "has some bad people" who deserve arrest. The three visited FOB Delta to sign guarantor forms for detainees scheduled for release under the MND-C Guarantor Release Program. When pressed to supply information on criminal elements, whether non-compliant Sadrists or competing organizations such as Badr, one asked whether CF would "be able to detain them, even if it is a senior figure." As with past meetings with Sadr Trend officials, the visitors made it clear that the substance of the meeting would be communicated back to Najaf. End summary.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Adil Mohammed Salman, (Suwayrah city council member), Rafid Abd Al-Kadhumi Jameel, (Aziziyah district council member), and Ala Sultan Khudhier (unspecified title in Aziziyah Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS)), explained that their purposes for meeting were to (1) make personal introductions and (2) secure release of the detainees. Provincial Sadrist leaders have pushed for detainee releases and provided a list of requested individuals. PRT and 214 FB designated three detainees from Wasit for release as part of the MND-C detainee release program, pending signatures from OMS representatives on guarantor release agreements.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) TL opened the meeting by emphasizing that the U.S. has no objections to Sadrist political aspirations, and emphasized the common ground between OMS and CF, including the need to provide better services for the destitute, to build a strong and independent Iraq, to reduce the level of violence, and to ensure fair political processes. Jameel expressed agreement with these principles and said that security must stabilize and "bad people need to be arrested."

But he said that in order to reduce tensions, CF and ISF should "have arrest warrants, not steal, not use dogs, and show respect for our women." Jameel continued, "we understand that American soldiers don't need the money so they don't steal," but, he underscored, "the Iraqi Army takes personal property and detains relatives of wanted individuals when the intended targets aren't present." These tactics prevent focusing on the political issues, he said. TL noted that the Sadrists likely will win seats in the next provincial elections, but that violence in the streets and recent events will erode Sadrist political support, as it has in the past.

[1](#)5. (S/NF) After signing the guarantor forms, Jameel noted the importance of the detainee releases as a great opportunity to build relations. He said that "detainees are treated very well by the Americans," laughingly saying that

"most gain weight while in detention." But, he said, it is a serious hardship for the families who have to pay to visit them. He strongly agreed with the practice of having OMS officials review and sign for the released individuals, because OMS is in a unique position to confirm or disconfirm the suitability of candidates for release. "Some bad people in the movement must remain detained," Jameel said. TL agreed that this was an excellent step in building mutual confidence and reiterated that "the intent of the US is to build up an independent and strong Iraq, an Iraq that is strong politically, economically and is secure."

16. (S/NF) Jameel agreed that "there are violent actions committed by other groups but blamed on JAM." TL asked "why don't you turn in the individuals responsible for damaging the reputation of your movement?" Jameel replied that "the reason is clear, the other side is the Government; it's easy for other parties to use the government to pass information (about JAM), but government officials that show sympathy towards us are removed." He said some local government officials in Aziziyah, including the mayor, have "military rank in Badr Corps" and are "looking more towards Iran than for the Iraqi people." He said even the Chief of Police was vulnerable to political retaliation if he acted in a way that seemed favorable to Sadrists. Khudhier then asked "if we give you evidence, are you going to detain them-even if it is senior figure?" TL explained that CF would not be used as a political tool, but would certainly look at any factual evidence provided on nefarious individuals in Wasit and stressed that any CF actions "would depend on the evidence."

17. (S/NF) Comment. As with the other engagements, the officials made it clear that Najaf would be kept fully informed on the content of the meeting. Unlike practiced

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politicians or more senior OMS representatives, these men were much more expressive when conveying their views. Ala Sultan Khudhier was the first OMS member we met who appeared eager to provide information on individuals (although he alluded to Badr and Iranian-tied figures, not renegade JAM or SG). The Suwayrah representative, Adil Mohammed Salman, declined the customary post meeting photo op while the other two were excited to get their pictures with the occupiers-even requesting copies at the next meeting. In follow-up phone calls on 2 April, all were glad to hear about the anticipated 24 April release date, and Khudhier agreed to come again, alone, to further discuss topics raised during this meeting. End comment.  
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